

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing, reexamination and further and favorable reconsideration of the subject application, in light of the following remarks, pursuant to and consistent with 37 C.F.R. § 1.116, are respectfully requested.

By the foregoing amendment, claims 19 and 20 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter recited therein. Applicants reserve the right to file a continuation and/or divisional application directed to any of the canceled subject matter.

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

On September 9, 2002, applicants filed an Information Disclosure Statement which included the following documents: (1) an Information Disclosure Statement Transmittal Letter; (2) an Information Disclosure Statement; (3) a 1449 Form (1 page); (4) a copy of EP 1 065 279 A1; and (5) a copy of application number 09/549,949. A copy of the postcard receipt date-stamped by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is attached hereto as evidence to support that the above documents were received by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

On the second page of the Information Disclosure Statement, not the 1449 Form, applicants properly listed application number 09/549,949¹ and requested the Examiner to return a copy of the Information Disclosure Statement with the Examiner's initials in the box adjacent to the paragraph indicating that the application had been considered.

On page 2, paragraph 4, the Examiner questioned how the Information Disclosure Statement could contain a second page when the 1449 Form, which was

¹ It is noted that application number 09/549,949 has subsequently issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,541,226.

acknowledge by the Examiner, was one page. The Examiner is correct that the 1449 Form was simply one page. However, the document entitled "Information Disclosure Statement" which was included along with the 1449 Form has two pages. It is the document entitled "Information Disclosure Statement" which listed the application and contained the box for the Examiner to initial so as to acknowledge consideration of the application. For the Examiner's convenience, a copy of the document, submitted on September 9, 2002, which is entitled "Information Disclosure Statement" is attached once again.

The Examiner is therefore requested to return a copy of the document entitled "Information Disclosure Statement" with the Examiner's initials placed in the box next to the paragraph on the second page indicating that application number 09/549,949 has been considered by the Examiner.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF DRAWING CHANGES

On June 17, 2003, applicants submitted a request for approval of drawing changes to Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 12 and 13 along with a red ink marked-up version identify the proposed changes. There is no indication in the Official Action whether or not these drawing changes have been approved. The Examiner is respectfully requested to approve these changes. Upon approval, applicants will implement the changes by submission of corrected drawings.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 11-18 are allowed.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 19 and 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Pati et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,948,653 A). Claims 19 and 20 have also been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Shigemori et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,541,226 B1). Both of these rejections are respectfully traversed.

To expedite prosecution, and not to acquiesce to the Examiner's rejections, claims 19 and 20 have been canceled. Thus, both of the Examiner's rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102 are rendered moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of these two rejections are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

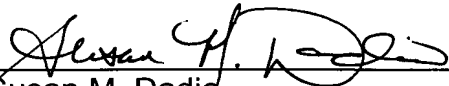
In view of the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is believed to be next in order. Such action is earnestly solicited.

In the event that there are any questions relating to this Amendment and Reply, or the application in general, it would be appreciated if the Examiner would telephone the undersigned attorney concerning such questions so that prosecution of this application may be expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

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